

DRAFT PLEDGE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

BELIEFS

1. Housing is a human right.

Housing is the foundation for health and well-being, enabling people to live with dignity, quality of life, and with basic access to opportunity.

2. We must coordinate housing strategies with complementary strategies in the areas of health, education, transportation, environment, and economic development to improve the overall quality of our community life.

Twenty first century community and economic development strategies must be attend to relational impact of interdependent factors that affect community and individual well-being.

3. There is social, environmental, and economic value in establishing mixed income, highly diverse neighborhoods with increased density in urban areas,

Diverse, racially equitable, mixed income communities are stronger, richer, and more vibrant places to live and work.

4. Government has an essential role and responsibility in the preservation, acquisition, and development of affordable housing to help build an economically diverse, racially equitable community. Public assets and financial incentives should be reserved for households with incomes up to 60% of Area Median Income (AMI) for renters and up to 80% of AMI for homeowners.

The market will not reliably meet the needs for accessible, safe, and affordable housing for all in our community. Public resources should be invested in projects and with developers whose mission is to support affordability in perpetuity.

5. Everyone in our community benefits when we ensure a wide variety of safe, healthy, affordable housing types at a range of price points.

There are assets, value, and cultural wealth in every part of our community. Everyone must be able to benefit from our community's assets.

6. We must improve access to homeownership, especially among low income households, persons of color, and Indigenous Peoples.

Commonly accepted housing policy and practices have effectively segregated communities, limited/excluded economic opportunity in communities of color, while offering public subsidies to others. We seek inclusionary policies that help realize our community's commitment to equity.

7. Renters bring distinctive, essential, social and economic value to our community. Renter voices should be valued. Tenant rights are valued and prioritized.

We must protect housing affordability and stability for tenants so that they can fully participate in the life of our community.

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GOALS

<p>I. Create and preserve dedicated affordable housing units.</p>	<p>II. Promote affordability by reducing barriers to new supply.</p>	<p>III. Help households access and afford homes.</p>	<p>IV. Protect against displacement and poor housing conditions.</p>
<p><i>Sustainable, adequate funding</i></p>			
<p><i>Complementary policies in health, education, transportation, economic development, environment</i></p>			

POLICY EXAMPLES from BENCHMARKED COMMUNITIES

Municipalities that are committed to affordable housing and equity have employed these policies and practices, among others.

- I. Preserve, acquire, and create dedicated affordable housing units.
 - Preserve Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) housing and locally subsidized housing that is approaching the end of its affordability period.
 - Request long-term affordable housing in every project that comes to the community as a standard practice. Asking is the first step.
 - Residential projects of five or more units that either receives financial assistance from the municipality, or is developed on property purchased from the municipality must meet long-term affordable housing requirements for lower-income residents.
 - Municipal dedicated taxes, millage, fees and bond-financing for affordable housing
 - Adopt Municipal Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) ordinances for qualified projects

- II. Promote affordability by reducing barriers to new supply.
 - Reduce or eliminate mandatory parking requirements in housing developments.
 - Streamline all housing development processes. Implement a “Fastest Track” and no- or low-fee process for affordable housing developments.
 - Support the construction of a variety of housing types, including “missing middle” types like duplexes, triplexes, in all neighborhoods. Allow for housing with up to three units, with denser development in selected urban areas including major corridors.

- III. Help households access and afford homes.
 - Ensure adequate local property tax hardship exemptions and ensure accessible processes to secure exemptions.
 - Increase fair housing education and enforcement activities
 - Strengthen and expand source of income protections to improve voucher holder’s ability to access housing.
 - Require owners of rental housing projects to accept tenant based rental housing assistance.
 - Ensure housing vouchers factor into income requirements to maximize access.

- IV. Protect against displacement and poor housing conditions.
 - Increase fair housing education and enforcement activities.

- Maximize maintenance of quality properties through a substantive landlord risk mitigation fund.
- Increase funding for homeowner rehabilitation programs including those that assist seniors to make needed repairs and modifications to their homes to support aging in place.
- Gather data and collaborate with researchers to better understand the causes of eviction in Washtenaw County
- Expand tenant access to representation in eviction cases, such as court-based eviction diversion programs or a civil right to counsel.

WASHTENAW COUNTY MUNICIPALITIES

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS RECOMMENDED

1. Preserve, acquire, and create dedicated affordable housing units
 - a. Ann Arbor: Pilot a fast track process for the next affordable housing development to be submitted through the plan review and approval process.
 - b. Affordable Housing Preservation Working group - continue prioritization and work plan for preserving affordable units in the county.
 - c. Organize for action on the following future developments in Ann Arbor:
 - i. Lockwood of Ann Arbor (senior housing - 38 units) Development
 - ii. Washington Street (behind Michigan Theater) - 19 affordable housing out of 245 total units (Alexis - City of AA)
 - d. Assess City of Ann Arbor Public Land for use for affordable housing. Where affordable housing is appropriate, provide land to local mission-drive non-profit housing developers for development. In cases where public land is sold, commit 50% of sales proceeds to Affordable Housing Fund.
2. Promote affordability by reducing barriers to new supply.
 - a. City of Ann Arbor Reduce/remove parking requirements for affordable housing developments.
 - b. Implement changes to corridor zoning to require mixed use units including residential.
 - c. Consider addition of duplexes and ADUs in all residential areas.
3. Help households access and afford homes.
 - a. Streamline local property tax hardship exemption processes.
 - b. Increase awareness of property tax exemptions among low-income homeowners.
 - c. Strengthen and expand source of income protections to improve voucher holder's ability to access housing.
 - d. Increase fair housing education and enforcement activities.
4. Protect against displacement and poor housing conditions.
 - a. Gather data and collaborate with researchers to better understand the causes of eviction in Washtenaw County.
 - b. Explore way to expand tenant access to representation in eviction cases, such as court-based eviction diversion programs or a civil right to counsel.

- c. Support voucher to home-ownership programs to help households using vouchers to build wealth over time.
5. Funding:
 - a. City of Ann Arbor: Protect the current commitment of City of Ann Arbor mental health millage dollars for affordable housing and supportive services.
 - b. Protect Washtenaw County mental health millage investment in supportive housing services.
 - c. City of Ann Arbor: Identify options for immediate and long range, substantial and sustainable increases to resources for affordable housing.
 - i. City of Ann Arbor: Adopt a dedicated revenue stream to generate at least \$2 million/year for 20 years through a millage, and/or general fund, and/or bond-financing, and/or fees to develop new and preserve existing affordable housing and housing supportive services.
 - d. City of Ann Arbor - approve Brownfield Policy requiring affordable units when residential is a part of the development, and Fee in Lieu of Affordable housing for commercial/industrial only projects.
 - e. Expand parking hours and commit increased parking revenue to the Affordable Housing Fund.

SOURCES

These resources have helped inform these beliefs and goals

- Minneapolis Unified Housing Plan
- Kent County Housing NOW! Plan
- National Community of Practice (CoP) on Local Housing Policy, a project of the NYU Furman Center and Abt Associates.
- December 2018 Housing Coalition Community Meeting
- 2015 Housing Affordability and Economic Equity Study
- 2017 Washtenaw Assessment of Fair Housing
- 2018 City of Ann Arbor Working Session presentation

NEXT STEPS

1. Engage with multiple other groups and individuals working on and affected by affordable housing needs to assess and confirm priorities for advocacy and action within each municipality.